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United Nations Forum on Forests
Open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group established pursuant to paragraph 48 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33
Second meeting
Bangkok, 24-28 October 2016

Report of the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group established pursuant to paragraph 48 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 on the work of its second meeting

Summary

By its resolution 2015/33, the Economic and Social Council established a working group and an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group under the United Nations Forum on Forests. In accordance with paragraph 48 of the resolution, the expert group was to conduct up to two meetings in 2016 to develop and submit proposals to the working group on the matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the resolution, namely: (a) the replacement of the reference to the Millennium Development Goals in paragraph 1 (b) of the United Nations forest instrument with an appropriate reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and targets; and (b) the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020, consistent with section XI of the resolution.

The second meeting of the expert group was held in Bangkok from 24 to 28 October 2016. The present report will be made available to the meeting of the working group of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

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I. Background

1. By paragraphs 46 and 48 of its resolution 2015/33, the Economic and Social Council established a working group and an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group under the United Nations Forum on Forests. The expert group was tasked, in paragraph 48 of the resolution, to conduct up to two meetings in 2016, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to develop and submit to the working group proposals on the matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the resolution.

II. Organizational and other matters

A. Venue and duration of the meeting

2. The second meeting of the expert group was held in Bangkok from 24 to 28 October 2016.

B. Opening of the meeting

3. The meeting was opened by the Co-Chairs of the expert group, Gholamhossein Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands).

4. The Co-Chairs, in their opening remarks, highlighted the importance of developing a strategic plan that was ambitious and actionable, and which would serve as a reference framework for action by all actors at all levels. They noted that good progress had been made in developing proposals for the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 during the past 18 months, since the conclusion of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in May 2015. They thanked Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations and stakeholders for sharing their valuable comments and views on the proposals by the Co-Chairs on building blocks and options for the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work and encouraged participants to continue to provide concrete views and suggestions during the course of the meeting.

5. In his opening statement, the Chair of the Bureau of the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Peter Besseau (Canada), stressed that the Forum was at a watershed moment, one that would translate the aspirations of the new phase of the international arrangement on forests into reality. He further emphasized the potential of the strategic plan to serve as a universal plan for action on forests and to develop a coherent approach across the existing forest-related objectives and commitments by integrating the global objectives on forests and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others.

6. The Director of the Forum secretariat, in his opening statement, provided an overview of key actions taken by the Forum secretariat in support of the work of the expert group. He pointed out that an integral component of the strategic plan related

to enhancing the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted that implementation of the strategic plan would benefit "on the ground" implementation of sustainable forest management at all levels. In that regard, he provided an update on ongoing capacity-development activities being carried out in order to facilitate access by Member States to forest financing and the development of national action plans to implement the United Nations forest instrument,[1] which were being funded by the United Nations Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation, as well as from earmarked contributions from China and unearmarked contributions from the United States of America.

C. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

7. The expert group adopted its agenda (E/CN.18/2016/AHEG/4) and programme of work. It was noted that there would be no negotiated outcome and that the Co-Chairs, on the basis of the discussions at the meeting, would prepare a revised proposal on the options and building blocks for the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020. To further streamline the proposal, the revised texts would also be discussed during informal consultations, which were to be conducted by the Co-Chairs before the end of 2016.

8. The representative of the secretariat of the Forum introduced the relevant documents for the meeting, which included the report of the first meeting of the expert group (E/CN.18/2016/AHEG/3) and other relevant papers, namely the proposals by the Co-Chairs of the expert group for the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020 and the reports of the expert group meetings on enhancing regional and subregional involvement in the work of the international arrangement on forests, held in Tehran from 26 to 28 September 2016, and on enhancing involvement of major groups and other stakeholders in the work of the international arrangement on forests, held in Ottawa on 5 and 6 October 2016.

D. Tasks of the expert group

9. In carrying out its tasks, the expert group was guided by Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33, by which it had been mandated to develop and submit proposals to the working group of the Forum on the matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the resolution, namely: (a) the replacement of the reference to the Millennium Development Goals in paragraph 1 (b) of the United Nations forest instrument with an appropriate reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and targets; and (b) the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020, consistent with section XI of the resolution. In developing proposals for the strategic plan, the expert group was expected to take into account the views of and proposals submitted by Member States and relevant stakeholders, as well as the relevant paragraphs of the resolution and the outcomes

[1] Formerly known as the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. Its name was changed by the General Assembly in resolution 70/199.

of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

10. The Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, presented a summary of the discussions of the meeting on enhancing regional and subregional involvement in the work of the international arrangement on forests, which was jointly organized by the Forum secretariat and the secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

11. The focal point for the children and youth major group, Anna Stemberger, presented a summary of the discussions of the meeting on enhancing involvement of major groups and other stakeholders in the work of the international arrangement on forests, which was jointly organized by the Forum secretariat and the Canadian Forest Service.

E. Attendance and participation

12. The meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group was attended by 110 government-designated experts from 53 countries, 16 other experts designated by member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, other international and regional organizations, regional processes and major groups, and independent experts. The list of participants will be made available on the Forum website.

III. Outcome and closing of the second meeting of the expert group

13. At the closing plenary session, the expert group adopted the report of the meeting and took note of the summary by the Co-Chairs, which is set out in the annex to the present report. The summary reflects key views and suggestions of experts on the revised proposals by the Co-Chairs on the options and building blocks for the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030 and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020.

14. The open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group, keeping in mind the provisions of section XIII (in particular paras. 46-48) of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33, and also bearing in mind that the deliberations and recommendations of its second session will be considered by the working group of the Forum, recommended that the Co-Chairs of the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group, Mr. Dehghani and Mr. Hoogeveen, also serve as the Co-Chairs of the working group of the Forum, to be elected at its first meeting on 16 January 2017, in accordance with paragraph 46 (b) of the resolution.

Annex

Summary by the Co-Chairs

I. Introduction

1. Experts expressed their deep condolences to the Government and people of Thailand at the passing of King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Experts expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group for the revised proposals of 11 October 2016 on building blocks and options for the strategic plan for the period 2017-2030[a] and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020.[b] Experts also expressed appreciation to the Co-Chairs for their leadership and to the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the organization of the second meeting of the expert group, and for excellent work delivered throughout the meeting.

2. Experts also expressed appreciation to the Governments of Finland, the Netherlands, Japan, Switzerland and the United States of America for their generous voluntary contributions to facilitate the participation of experts.

3. Experts expressed their appreciation to the Economic Cooperation Organization for hosting the expert meeting on enhancing regional and subregional involvement in the work of the international arrangement on forests, held in Tehran from 26 to 28 September, and to the Government of Canada for hosting the expert meeting on enhancing involvement of major groups and other stakeholders in the work of the international arrangement on forests, held in Ottawa on 5 and 6 October 2016.

4. It was stressed that the Co-Chairs' summary of the discussions was not a negotiated text and that the points presented did not necessarily reflect the views of all experts.

II. General points on the strategic plan and quadrennial programme of work

5. There was a general view that the strategic plan should be called the "United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030" in order to convey its importance and relevance to the work of the United Nations system.

6. Experts stressed the need to improve awareness of the global objectives on forests among Member States and stakeholders, as it was observed that the objectives were not well known outside the Forum and national forest agencies; in contrast, there was greater public and political awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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[a] Available from http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AHEG_Co-Chairs_Building-Blocks_Strategic_Plan_11Oct2016.pdf.

[b] Available from http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AHEG_Co-Chairs_4POW_2017-20_11Oct2016.pdf.

7. There was a general view that the strategic plan should:

(a) Provide a reference framework for forest-related work within the United Nations system as whole, including through promoting synergies, as well as guide the work of the international arrangement on forests based on guidance provided in Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33;

(b) Be clear, concise, workable, high level, strategic, aspirational and user friendly, have enduring relevance through 2030 and provide an effective framework for the implementation of sustainable forest management by actors at all levels;

(c) Serve as a communications, outreach and messaging tool on the positive contribution of forests and the forest sector to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals, the Paris Agreement and other international commitments;

(d) Address fragmentation in global forest governance.

8. It was also noted that the concept of voluntary planned contributions was analogous to the concept of nationally determined contributions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. The term "voluntary planned contributions" was intended to stress the voluntary nature of such contributions in the context of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Forest-related commitments included in nationally determined contributions could form the basis of voluntary planned contributions.

9. Several experts noted the need to clarify and further consider the concept of voluntary planned contributions/voluntary actions, including the view that all actors, stakeholders and partners could put forth their voluntary planned contributions.

10. Various views were expressed on global goals and targets, as follows:

(a) Global goals should capture the objectives of the international arrangement on forests and the global objectives on forests;

(b) Global goals and targets should be linked to existing internationally agreed goals and targets;

(c) Global goals and targets should also address issues not covered by the global objectives on forests, such as coherence and complementarity of forest-related work at all levels, particularly within the United Nations system;

(d) Some targets might be better placed in the quadrennial programme of work;

(e) Targets should be supported by existing information, baseline data and indicators, and relate to ongoing work on global forest indicators.

11. There was a general view that the quadrennial programme of work should focus on the Forum's contribution to implementing the strategic plan. It was also suggested that, in general, the quadrennial programmes of work should:

(a) Set the agenda of Forum sessions;

(b) Address intersessional work;

(c) Address regional approaches and Collaborative Partnership on Forests contributions;

(d) Be action-oriented and facilitate action on the ground;

(e) Contain actions related to voluntary planned contributions;

(f) Include concrete targets and outcomes to attract the involvement and contributions of stakeholders.

12. It was suggested that the quadrennial programme of work could be better considered once further progress had been made on the content of the strategic plan. It was also suggested that thematic areas could provide a bridge between the strategic plan and the quadrennial programmes of work.

III. Introduction (chapter I of the strategic plan)

13. The following views were expressed:

(a) The language in the strategic plan should be clear and accessible, and long sentences should be avoided;

(b) Add "trees outside forests" in the title of section A, and elsewhere in the strategic plan, where appropriate;

(c) Replace "global" with "international" throughout the text, where appropriate;

(d) Add "all types of forests" throughout the strategic plan, where appropriate;

(e) Consider replacing "achieving" sustainable forest management with "promoting and implementing" sustainable forest management;

(f) Include ethical reasons for conserving forests, (e.g., for the benefit of present and future generations);

(g) Refer specifically to indigenous peoples and local communities and to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

(h) Refer specifically to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;

(i) Refer to the green economy;

(j) Refer to the right to decent work;

(k) Refer to sand and dust storms;

(l) Streamline the text by moving some of the introductory text in sections B and C and the text boxes to other sections, such as annexes, the message from the Secretary-General, the foreword by the Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests or the communication and outreach strategy;

(m) Arabic numerals, rather than Roman numerals, could be used to number chapters.

14. Experts made a number of specific proposals to amend individual paragraphs under the introduction. Those were taken note of by the Forum secretariat.

IV. Vision and mission (chapter II of the strategic plan)

15. Some experts stressed that the vision and mission statements should be clear and concise.

16. It was also proposed that the vision and mission statements be moved to the beginning of the introduction.

A. Vision of the strategic plan

17. A number of experts favoured option 2 as written or with amendments, in particular by amending option 2 to refer to "all types of forests" and "present and future generations".

18. A few experts favoured option 1 as written or by replacing "protected" with "conserved", option 4, or a combination of options 1, 2 or 4.

B. Mission of the strategic plan

19. Many experts favoured options 1, 3 or 4 as written or with modifications.

20. Some experts proposed replacing "the 2030 Agenda" with "sustainable development", so as not to limit the mission under any option.

21. Some experts in favour of option 3 proposed replacing "halt" with "reduce" and deleting multiple references to "policy", while others proposed retaining "halt". Other experts considered option 3 too long to be an effective mission statement. A new option drawing on option 3 was also proposed.

22. A few experts favoured a combination of options 1 and 2, or a combination of options 1 and 3.

V. Global goals and targets (chapter III of the strategic plan)

23. Experts expressed their appreciation for the non-papers that were prepared and made available during the meeting to facilitate their discussions. The non-papers included topics on: (a) the Sustainable Development Goals and forest contributions (prepared by experts from Switzerland and Chile); (b) forests and the Sustainable Development Goals (prepared by the expert from Switzerland); (c) existing intergovernmentally agreed targets, objectives, goals and commitments on forests (prepared by the Forum secretariat); (d) categories of forest data where baselines are known (prepared by the Forum secretariat); and (e) comments on global goals and targets (prepared by the Forum secretariat).

24. Experts expressed the view that the development and determination of goals and targets should be based on the guiding principles set out below.

A. Guiding principles for the strategic plan

25. The following views were expressed:

(a) A chapeau should be introduced that would state that the strategic plan builds on already agreed forest-related United Nations goals, targets and commitments to the extent possible in order to support the implementation of the United Nations forest instrument and other international commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement;

(b) A chapeau should provide a rationale on the value-added nature of forest goals and targets and the Forum in the context of promoting sustainable forest management;

(c) The vision, principles and commitments reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals should provide a context for the strategic plan;

(d) Goals and targets should be consistent with the vision and mission set out in the strategic plan;

(e) It should be emphasized that forests contribute to all Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, among other international commitments;

(f) The expert group should avoid renegotiating previously agreed language;

(g) As with the Sustainable Development Goals, the goals and targets of the strategic plan should be universal, interlinked and intended to stimulate and provide a framework for voluntary actions and contributions by countries and partners;

(h) Any quantitative/numerical targets should be based on existing information and baseline data;

(i) Overarching principles such as human rights, gender equality, peace and security and partnerships, as well as other cross-cutting issues of the 2030 Agenda, should be taken into account in the strategic plan and the quadrennial programmes of work;

(j) The strategic plan should avoid creating any extra reporting burden on Member States;

(k) Targets should be:

(i) Time bound;

(ii) Global in nature;

(iii) Meaningful, impactful and relevant;

(iv) Ambitious but realizable;

(v) Limited in number;

(vi) Balanced in number across goals;

(vii) Value-added with respect to existing internationally agreed targets;

(viii) Quantitative/numerical and qualitative/process-related;

(l) Key terms used in quantitative/numerical targets should be based on United Nations agreed definitions (the Forum and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will provide a list of definitions with references by 1 December 2016);

(m) Additional targets could be developed through the quadrennial programmes of work and added at a later stage.

B. General views on goals contained in the strategic plan

26. Of the three options proposed, experts favoured either option 1 (six global goals) or option 2 (four global goals plus two cross-cutting strategies). In that regard, it was noted that global goals would be more easily understood.

27. Some experts proposed that the strategic plan should include only goals and targets, and thematic areas and priority actions should be addressed in the quadrennial programme of work. Others proposed that the strategic plan should include only goals and thematic areas, and that targets should be placed in the quadrennial programme of work.

28. Some experts proposed referring to the goals as "strategic forest goals" or "strategic goals on forests" or "sustainable forest goals" to distinguish them from the global objectives on forests and Sustainable Development Goals.

29. The importance of linking the goals to the Sustainable Development Goals was stressed.

C. General views on targets contained in the strategic plan

30. In addition to the guiding principles, it was suggested that the number of targets be limited under each goal to no more than five, and that other relevant target areas in the thematic areas for action be included as appropriate.

31. Some experts proposed moving targets with a 2020 timeline to the quadrennial programme of work for 2017-2020.

32. It was noted that targets should be considered in the context of ongoing efforts to develop global forest indicators, which would be used to measure progress on targets. In that context, the annex to the Co-Chair's proposal on building blocks and options for the strategic plan was revised to show the draft indicators for Sustainable Development Goals 6.6, 15.1 and 15.2, and possible subindicators for Goal 15.2, which are currently under consideration by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

33. Some experts proposed the establishment of a task team composed of technical experts from FAO and the Forum, as well as other Collaborative Partnership on Forests members, to assist in developing quantitative/numerical targets based on the existing information sources.

34. It was also noted that the outcome of an initiative led by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on the development of global forest indicators could be useful and should be considered in developing targets. It was noted that the proposed targets were global in nature, rather than national, and that countries could determine if and how they might contribute to a given target through their voluntary planned contributions. It was not envisioned that all countries would contribute to all targets or that all targets would be relevant to the situations in all countries.

35. It was suggested that additional targets might be considered in 2024 during the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests to reflect developments and/or improved information.

D. Specific views on targets contained in the strategic plan

Goal 1 targets

36. The following views were expressed:

(a) Split goal 1 into two or three goals, to reflect the different elements of the goal;

(b) Include five targets corresponding to the five elements of goal 1 (loss of forest cover, protection, afforestation/reforestation, degradation/restoration, resilience). In that context, FAO noted that baseline information could be made available to develop quantitative/numerical targets in most of those areas;

(c) Retain the reference to "resilience to climate change";

(d) Delete references to the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests;

(e) Merge targets (a), (b) and (c);

(f) Merge targets (b) and (d);

(g) Delete target (c);

(h) Merge targets (e) and (f);

(i) Formulate target (d) using the exact language from Sustainable Development Goal 15.2;

(j) Add a reference to indigenous peoples and local communities to target (g);

(k) Delete target (h) on forest fires and add forest fires to the thematic areas for action;

(l) Clarify the term "natural forests";

(m) Focus on four areas: forest cover, sustainable forest management (in accordance with indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 15), biomass and restoration.

Goal 2 targets

37. The following views were expressed:

(a) Include a target for each element of goal 2 (economic, social and environmental benefits);

(b) Concern was raised about the measurability of "extreme poverty" in target (a), noting non-monetary factors in that regard;

(c) Reformulate target (a) to ensure consistency with Sustainable Development Goal 1;

(d) Add a reference to indigenous peoples and local communities in targets (a) and (d);

(e) Merge targets (a) and (f);

(f) Merge targets (b) and (g) and make them qualitative;

(g) Merge targets (a), (d) and (g);

(h) Retain targets (b), (c) and (e);

(i) Expand target (b) to include sustainable forest-based enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as women's enterprises;

(j) Merge targets (b) and (c);

(k) Add a reference to access by forest and farm producers and small-scale forest-based enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services and markets;

(l) Retain target (d);

(m) In target (e), link payment for ecosystem services to benefits for forest-dependent people;

(n) Clarify the term "natural forests";

(o) Make target (e) qualitative;

(p) Add non-wood forest products to target (f);

(q) Make target (g) qualitative;

(r) Use Sustainable Development Goal language for targets (f), (g) and (h);

(s) Priority targets would be target (a) (using language based on Sustainable Development Goal 1); target (e) (as a qualitative target); food security; wood energy; contribution of forests to economic development (employment, etc.); and contribution of urban forests;

(t) Add a target on the role young people play in forests, in particular in forest industries in developing countries;

(u) Focus on four areas: the contribution of forest ecosystem services to national economies, poverty reduction in forest-dependent populations, the contribution of urban forests and forest education;

(v) Baseline information is available on forest sector employment and forest contribution to gross domestic product.

Goal 3 targets

38. The following views were expressed:

(a) Include targets for each element of goal 3;

(b) Reorder targets to reflect goal 3 elements;

(c) Focus on target (a);

(d) Consider language under Sustainable Development Goal 15 and in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for target (a);

(e) Concerns were raised about reference to high-conservation-value forests in target (a);

(f) Reformulate target (a);

(g) Delete target (b);

(h) Reformulate target (b) to focus on certification as a market-based tool;

(i) Sustainable use of woody biomass should be addressed as a target in some way;

(j) No baseline is proposed for target (c), and it should be reformulated;

(k) Delete target (d);

(l) Retain target (d);

(m) Reformulate target (d) by focusing on trade practices;

(n) Add a target on fostering sustainable forest management;

(o) Forest areas allocated for total protection and forest areas under sustainable forest management could form the basis for two numerical targets;

(p) Focus on three areas: the protection of high-conservation-value forests, sustainable forest management (in accordance with subindicators for Sustainable Development Goal 15.2) and trade in forest products;

(q) Concerns were raised about the measurability of a target on trade in forest products.

Goal 4 targets

39. The following views were expressed:

(a) Keep goal 4 consistent with the fourth global objective on forests;

(b) Scientific, technical and technological cooperation and partnerships were a very important means of implementation and should not be deleted from goal 4;

(c) Science and partnerships were not only about cooperation and synergies;

(d) Targets should not include concrete financial commitments, particularly in targets (a) and (f);

(e) If numerical targets were not included under goal 4, numerical targets should not be included under the other goals;

(f) Approach targets under goal 4 in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;

(g) Modify target (a) to include national budgets;

(h) Modify target (a) to include all sources;

(i) Delete "forest-based industries" in target (a);

(j) Add a reference to countries with economies in transition in target (b);

(k) Retain target (b);

(l) Delete target (c);

(m) Retain target (c);

(n) Retain targets (d), (e) and (f);

(o) Move targets (d) and (e) to goal 6/cross-cutting strategy 2;

(p) Strengthen target (d);

(q) Make target (e) qualitative;

(r) Move target (f) to the quadrennial programme of work;

(s) Delete target (f);

(t) Retain target (f) as written;

(u) Modify target (f) to focus on the number of countries assisted by the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;

(v) Add a target on public-private partnerships as a way to generate financing for sustainable forest management;

(w) Focus on three areas: the mobilization of various sources of financing, such as official development assistance, payment for ecosystem services and domestic budgets; international funding for forests such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund; and public-private partnerships.

Goal 5/cross-cutting strategy 1 targets

40. The following views were expressed:

(a) Revise the text of goal 5 to add "to implement sustainable forest management" after "sustainable governance frameworks";

(b) Delete the reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the text of goal 5;

(c) Retain target (a) as formulated;

(d) There could be baseline information for target (a);

(e) No baseline information was available for target (b);

(f) Add positive incentives to target (b);

(g) Only baseline estimates were available for target (c);

(h) Make target (c) qualitative;

(i) Reformulate target (d) in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals 1.4 and 5.a;

(j) Delete target (d);

(k) Baseline information was available for target (d) but had not been disaggregated by gender;

(l) No baseline information was available for target (e);

(m) It was useful to focus on land tenure;

(n) Reformulate target (e) as an aim;

(o) Reformulate target (e) along the lines of Sustainable Development Goal 16.7;

(p) Modify target (e) to reflect all countries where all forests are privately owned;

(q) Delete target (f);

(r) Reformulate targets to focus on implementation of relevant United Nations forest instrument actions;

(s) Add a new target on global forest governance and cross-sectoral coordination;

(t) Add a new target on enabling conditions/environment for sustainable forest management;

(u) Focus on five areas: cross-sectoral platforms, land tenure/ownership, access to information, cooperation to address forest crimes and legal forest trade.

Goal 6/cross-cutting strategy 2 targets

41. The following views were expressed:

(a) Revise the text of goal 6 to add "at all levels, in particular" after "issues" and include the same formulation as in target (a);

(b) Consider qualitative targets;

(c) Reformulate target (b) to enhance the status and role of forests in the United Nations system;

(d) Reformulate target (b) to start with: "By 2030, a mechanism for the operation of a United Nations Forest Programme ...";

(e) Reformulate target (b) to include the consideration of a possible forest convention;

(f) Consider moving targets 4 (d) and (e) to goal 6;

(g) Add a target on the science-policy interface;

(h) Add a target on harmonizing national reporting (to reduce reporting burdens);

(i) Add a process-related target on the collaboration between Member States, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, regional and subregional organizations as well as major groups and other stakeholders;

(j) Reflect the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders;

(k) Reflect the involvement of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(l) Focus on 2 areas: joint initiatives of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and public-private partnerships.

VI. Thematic areas (chapter III of the strategic plan)

42. There was a general view that identifying thematic areas for action could be useful specifically for clustering and building coherence for actions. Some experts were in favour of moving thematic areas and any associated actions to the quadrennial programmes of work.

43. Some experts supported the idea that the initial priority actions under thematic areas would be the 44 actions contained in the United Nations forest instrument, and that the Forum would identify additional priority actions as needed through its quadrennial programmes of work and resolutions.

44. It was stressed that the lists of thematic areas could not be exhaustive.

45. It was noted that thematic areas should reflect the themes of the United Nations forest instrument actions, as well as relevant themes from the Sustainable Development Goal targets, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Paris Agreement and other relevant international commitments.

46. The importance of including the cross-cutting thematic issues contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international goals and commitments was underscored.

47. Experts made a number of specific comments on the proposed thematic areas for action under each goal, including proposals to amend, clarify and add thematic areas. Those were taken note of by the secretariat.

VII. Implementation framework (chapter IV of the strategic plan)

48. A number of experts were of the view that chapter IV could be streamlined, and several proposals for streamlining and deletion were put forward.

49. It was suggested that paragraph 30 was a strong positive statement that might be better placed earlier in the text.

A. Roles and responsibilities (chapter IV.A of the strategic plan)

50. A number of experts proposed replacing "voluntary planned contributions" with "voluntary actions", while others considered voluntary planned contributions to be a critical approach. In that context, it was noted that the actions in the United

Nations forest instrument and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests-Intergovernmental Forum on Forests Proposals for Action were voluntary actions.

51. It was suggested that the relationship of voluntary planned contributions with the existing national reporting of the Forum and reporting commitments in other processes be clarified.

52. It was proposed that another subparagraph be added to paragraph 37 with regard to the Forum's engagement of other sectors.

53. It was noted that the information contained in section A.3 on the functions of the secretariat was covered by appendix 2, and that some aspects could also be taken forward within the quadrennial programme of work.

54. It was noted that section A.4 on the Collaborative Partnership on Forests should be clearly linked to the sessions of the Forum, particularly in the context of the scope of the sessions held in odd-numbered years.

55. It was noted that sections A.5 and A.6 on the United Nations system and other intergovernmental partners were important.

56. Several experts stressed the need to enhance collaboration and coordination with regional and subregional partners, particularly in the context of the scope of the sessions of the Forum held in odd-numbered years, and noted their preference for developing more informal coordination arrangements rather than formal mechanisms. Some experts supported formal mechanisms.

57. It was suggested that the reference to "partners" in the heading of section A.7 downplayed the nature and role of regional/subregional organizations and should be replaced with "organizations and processes".

58. With regard to paragraph 65, several experts expressed the view that a roster of government-nominated experts should be developed in addition to a roster of non-governmental experts, and noted that that idea should appear earlier in the text.

59. On the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum, reference was made to the fact that the provisions of paragraphs 14 to 16 of General Assembly resolution 67/290 applied mutatis mutandis to the Forum in view of the existing modalities and practices of the Forum.

60. Major groups put new proposals forward for section A.8. They included the establishment of a multi-stakeholder advisory group to inform the Forum on cross-cutting issues and allow more flexibility for non-governmental stakeholders to engage in the Forum, and inviting a major group representative to attend bureau meetings as an observer.

61. It was noted that major groups made important contributions to sustainable forest management, including by channelling "on the ground" feedback to the global level. The need to involve major groups and other stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan was emphasized. In that regard, the opportunity presented by the Forum's technical sessions, held in odd-numbered years, as a platform for major groups as well as regional/subregional organizations was highlighted.

62. The view was expressed that the language in the revised proposal might be too specific for the strategic plan.

63. It was suggested that the relationship of stakeholders with the Forum or Bureau might be better taken up in the quadrennial programme of work. Questions were raised as to whether major groups needed observer status for Bureau meetings in order to put forth stakeholder ideas and issues. In that regard, it was suggested that major groups could reach out to individual countries that might be willing to take forward their ideas.

64. It was suggested that the concept of a Forest Partnership Forum, as set out in paragraph 64, need not be limited to the Forum's high-level segments.

B. Means and resources for implementation (chapter IV.B of the strategic plan)

65. Experts expressed appreciation to Markku Simula, Forum consultant, for his presentation on the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network initial stocktaking and outlook.

66. A number of suggestions were made to streamline paragraphs 66 to 73, including by making the references to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda more succinct, while others proposed to retain them. It was also proposed that reference be made to other donors, including the private sector, philanthropic organizations, domestic resources and other sources of finance.

67. It was pointed out that paragraphs 66 and 67 were based on agreed language from the United Nations forest instrument and formed an important context for the strategic plan. The importance of "prerequisite" in paragraph 72 was also stressed.

68. The view was expressed that there was no need to establish a new Global Environment Facility focal area on forests.

69. A number of experts were of the view that the description of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network should be consistent with the language in Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33. It was also noted that the resolution gave the Forum the mandate to establish priorities for the Network, and the importance of capacity-building was mentioned in that regard. It was suggested that the priorities of the Network, as set out in paragraphs 74 to 78, could be moved to the quadrennial programme of work.

70. A number of experts expressed support for one of the priorities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to be assisting countries in accessing financing from the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, especially in the context of the formulation of project concepts.

71. It was pointed out that the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network was supported not only by voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests but also through United Nations technical cooperation and capacity-development programme sources.

72. It was noted that the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network's role was catalytic and therefore assessing "performance" might not be as relevant as

assessing the involvement of countries in the Network and the benefits received (see para. 78 of the strategic plan).

73. It was also noted that paragraph 80 should not be limited to voluntary planned contributions.

VIII. Review framework (chapter V of the strategic plan)

74. A number of experts suggested streamlining section A and moving some details to the quadrennial programme of work. It was noted that paragraph 91 should not imply new indicators. It was also noted that the reference in paragraph 92 to "sufficiency of resources" was not appropriate in that context. It was proposed that it be mentioned explicitly that the strategic plan would be updated as needed based on the results of the review.

75. With regard to section B, it was suggested that paragraphs 94 and 95 were sufficient, and that paragraph 96 assumed the consideration of the reporting cycle at the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

76. With regard to section C, it was suggested that paragraphs 100 and 101 were sufficient, and that paragraphs 102 to 104 could be covered in the quadrennial programme of work.

77. It was also suggested that all sections be maintained as written.

IX. Communication and outreach strategy (chapter VI of the strategic plan)

78. Experts recognized the importance of communication and outreach.

79. Several experts proposed streamlining the section and moving some elements to the quadrennial programme of work; however, the importance of retaining the section as written was also noted.

80. A number of experts suggested the communication and outreach strategy should be set out in a separate document.

81. The importance of utilizing existing regional Forest Communicators' Networks for activities in that area was noted.

X. Quadrennial programme of work

82. Experts proposed that the work of all actors and stakeholders, including regional/subregional organizations and major group and other stakeholders, be guided within the context of the odd- and even-year sessions of the Forum.

83. Experts stressed the need to link the thematic priorities of the Forum sessions to the annual themes and in-depth reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals by the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

84. Experts recognized the importance of including specific activities on communications and outreach in the quadrennial programme of work.

85. Some experts recognized the importance of including items related to contributions to other forest-related processes, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

86. Several experts proposed that the items on roles and responsibilities of actors be moved from the strategic plan to the quadrennial programme of work, including sections A.2 and A.3, paragraph 45 of section A.4, paragraph 48 of section A.5, paragraphs 75 to 78 of section B.1, section B.3, and much of chapters V and VI.

87. Experts made specific comments on the proposed priorities actions to be considered from the twelfth to fifteenth sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including proposals to amend, clarify and add priority actions. Those were taken note of by the secretariat.